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# ART & RECONCILIATION



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details evaluative research on *Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program* conducted over 2017-18. *Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program* is run by *Post Conflict Research Centre (PCRC)*, a peacebuilding organisation based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The evaluative research sought to explore how the program was experienced by the youth correspondent participants and whether (and how) it did or did not affect their attitudes towards reconciliation and capacity as young peace-builders and change makers. The evaluation was conducted by researchers working on the AHRC funded, *Art & Reconciliation*.

*Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program* is shown to be a successful model for enabling youth-driven participatory media and peace-building by building the capacity, creativity and skills of young people identified as potential change-makers. Solidifying their positive attitudes towards inter-ethnic co-operation, reconciliation and inclusive society, the project amplified and extended the profiles and networks of its active participants as young peace-builders and media professionals. The Balkan Diskurs platform provides a unique space for young people to define, share and influence peace-building and civil society narratives and agendas.

This report details the objectives of the evaluative research; the evaluation data compiled and provides an analysis of the key findings on participant profiles, participation levels, outputs and participant perceptions of the project experience. It goes on to examine the research findings through the indicative themes of tolerance, mutual understanding and inter ethnic co-operation; moral courage; creativity and actors in peace-building.

*Art and Reconciliation* is an innovative and interdisciplinary research initiative, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, and led by King's College London and partners at the University of the Arts London and London School of Economics and Political Science that seeks to ask questions about reconciliation in post-conflict settings, how it is understood and conceptualised by different communities, how it might be achieved and when we might know if a reconciliation process has been successful. The research especially focuses on the exploring the relationship between art and reconciliation and role and contribution of the arts in reconciliation processes, asking how might the arts challenge what it is that is imagined as 'reconciliation'.

### Author

Dr Tiffany Fairey is a Research Fellow based at the Photography & the Archive Research Centre, University of the Arts, London. Co-founder and former director of the award-winning charity PhotoVoice, her research focuses on participatory and community arts and photography, visual research methods and arts evaluation. She is currently a researcher on the AHRC funded project, *Art and Reconciliation*. In 2010 she was awarded the Royal Photographic Society's Hood Medal for outstanding advance in photography for public service.

## Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program Overview

*Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program* is a participatory media, arts and mentoring program that aims to encourage new approaches to promoting transitional justice and reconciliation among Bosnian youth. The project seeks to catalyse a new form of participatory youth-produced media that promotes peace-building and inclusive civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and provides Bosnian youth with platform to engage and build their credibility as relevant actors within peace-building processes<sup>1</sup>.

The program is run by *Post Conflict Research Centre (PCRC)*, a peacebuilding organisation based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina dedicated to restoring a culture of peace and preventing violent conflict in the Western Balkans by delivering multidisciplinary and innovative approaches to peace education, creative multi-media and transitional justice. Their vision is for a society where people no longer perceive diversity as a source of conflict but as the basis for prosperity<sup>2</sup>.

*Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program* is an annual program that consists of a 4-5 days of multimedia training followed by a specialised mentoring program where participants are supported to be youth correspondents for Balkan Diskurs, an online multimedia platform that provides young citizen journalists, activists and academics in the Western Balkans with a space to publish articles on relevant regional issues. During the mentorship the youth correspondents refine their media production skills and build their networks, engaging in opportunities that support their career development and build their profiles and credibility as young peace-builders.

Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program evolved out of PCRC's Ordinary Heroes programme<sup>3</sup> and the Srđan Aleksić Youth Competition<sup>4</sup>, a nationwide competition that challenges Bosnian youth to uncover stories from their communities that relate to moral courage, rescuer behavior and interethnic cooperation. PCRC has been running annual youth multimedia training workshops since 2014, working with 58 young people aged 18-30 from 30 different Bosnian cities and from both the Federation and Republika Srpska entities as well as the Brčko District.

This evaluation focuses on *Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program* between 2017-2018 over an entire cycle of the project, following the experiences of its 2017 cohort group. During that year the program involved 17 young people aged 18-28 from 13 different locations across BiH. These young people participated in 5 days of citizen journalism workshops in Sarajevo in June 2017 and went on to be offered mentoring support by PCRC to engage in arts and media based projects and assignments and to work individually and collaboratively in producing articles and photo essays for Balkan Diskurs and other publications and opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.p-crc.org/our-work/creative-multimedia/digital-media/citizen-journalism-and-digital-activism-youth-multimedia-training-mentorship-program/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.p-crc.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.p-crc.org/our-work/peace-education/ordinary-heroes-peacebuilding-program/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.p-crc.org/our-work/creative-multimedia/digital-media/srdjan-aleksic-youth-competition/>

## Evaluation Objectives and Methods

Undertaken as part of the wider research project *Art and Reconciliation*, this evaluation sought to understand the impact of Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program on the 17 participants involved during the 2017-18 project cycle. The evaluation did not take the form of a traditional programmatic evaluation but rather was informed by a research driven evaluative approach rooted in the wider research questions informing *Art and Reconciliation* that asked:

- How is the arts intervention conceptualised and experienced by those involved?
- What is the impact of the arts intervention on those involved?
- What is the impact of the arts intervention on reconciliation (and peace-building)?
- What is the most effective way to measure, capture and evidence the contribution of the arts to reconciliation?

The evaluation sought to explore how the program was experienced by the youth correspondent participants and whether (and how) it did or did not affect their attitudes towards reconciliation and capacity as young peace-builders and change makers. The aim is to better understand the role of the creative and strategic arts in reconciliation processes. This evaluation was being conducted in the context of research that did not seek to pre-define what is meant by 'reconciliation' but rather that looks to understand how it is conceptualised and practiced. Reconciliation is understood to be a contested term with multiple meanings for different stakeholders.

At the outset of the evaluation a set of five indicative themes were developed to track and measure the impact of the project on participant's perceptions. These were adapted and developed out of indicators originally developed by Dr Sabina Čehajić-Clancy, a social psychologist specialising in intergroup reconciliation, who conducted research into PCRC's Ordinary Heroes Program<sup>5</sup>. These indicative themes were used to structure the preparation of evaluation questions, surveys and interviews.

### **TOLERANCE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

- perceptions of out groups – re-humanisation of out groups
- levels of intergroup anxiety and trust
- capacity to develop shared frameworks / projects
- belief in reconciliation
- attitudes towards forgiveness

### **INTER ETHNIC CO-OPERATION**

- levels of inter-group contact and interactions within their own communities
- development of inter-ethnic friendships and co-operation within the group
- capacity to work constructively and in dialogue with other participants from different ethnic groups
- future contact intentions

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<sup>5</sup> See Čehajić-Clancy, S., & Bilewicz, M. (2017). Fostering reconciliation through historical moral exemplars in a post-conflict society. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 17(4).

### **MORAL COURAGE**

- perceptions of moral courage
- identifying moral courage in their communities
- generating stories that demonstrate moral courage
- active propagation of stories of moral courage within their own communities and networks

### **CREATIVITY**

- skills acquisition
- empowered to / confidence in applying and using new skills
- demonstration of creative thinking and problem solving in generating content – capacity to work independently, generate story ideas, build local networks etc
- quality of their final content

### **ACTORS IN PEACEBUILDING**

- belief in reconciliation
- empowered to engage in peace-building activity
- generation of content that supports peace-building and reconciliation in local communities
- empowered to actively engage in peace-building activity and network with other young activists, peace-builders and peace-building orgs
- other peace-building activity beyond generation of content as part of project process

In addition to investigating the actual and potential role of the creative and strategic arts in 'reconciliation', *Art and Reconciliation* has sought to develop methods and approaches to evaluating arts-based and creative projects. Questioning how we measure the impact of arts and strategic arts based interventions, this evaluation employed mixed methods that combined quantitative, qualitative and participatory approaches in order to offset the biases and limitations of one method with the strengths of another<sup>6</sup>. This design was developed in response to literature that assesses the social impact of the arts based interventions and highlights a number of failures in existing evaluation methods and models<sup>7</sup> namely a reliance on 'anecdotal' evidence and concerns over the value and appropriateness of statistical and quantitative methods.

The evaluation focuses on capturing the impact of the project on the youth participants over using mixed methods. The multi-method research sought to generate and capture plural types of evaluation data using surveys, interviews, focus groups and content analysis to allow for triangulation and cross data analysis. The list below summarises the data collected over the period May 2017 – October 2018.

- Participant workshop entry and exit survey using likert scales
- Focus group during workshops
- Participant initial interviews
- Participant mid project interviews

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<sup>6</sup> Greene, J.C., V.J Caracelli, and W.F. Graham. 1989. 'Toward a Conceptual Framework for Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs'. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 11 (3): 255–74.

<sup>7</sup> Belfiore, Eleonora, and Oliver Bennett. 2007. 'Rethinking the Social Impacts of the Arts'. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 13 (2): 135–51.; Merli, Paola. 2002. 'Evaluating the Social Impact of Participation in Arts Activities'. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 8 (1): 107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630290032477>.

- Participant end of project interviews
- Youth Correspondents panel, Art and Reconciliation workshop, June 2018
- Interview with Tatjana Milovanović, PCRC Manager of Field Operations
- Interview with Leslie Woodward, PCRC Co-founder & Vice President
- Review of photo dialogues project
- Review of Possible Landscapes project
- Content analysis of Balkan Diskurs youth correspondents' articles
- Online, web and social media viewing statistics

## FINDINGS

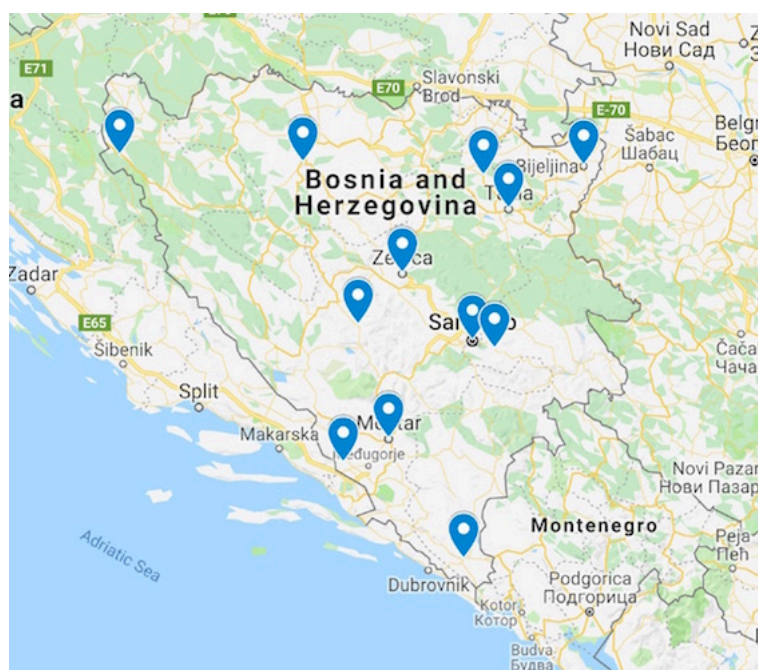
### Participant Profiles

Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program 2017-2018 involved 17 young people aged 18-28 from 13 different locations across BiH. More than 50% of participants were aged 21-24 years, equal gender split and from all parts of the country. The participant group was ethnically mixed and made up of young people that were pursuing journalism in their studies and as a potential career and / or were involved in localised activism of civil society, working on human rights issues or with local NGOs and / or youth centres.

#### Participants by Age:

18 yrs: 1	24 yrs: 2
19 yrs: 1	25 yrs: 1
20 yrs: 1	26 yrs: 1
21yrs: 2	27 yrs: 0
22yrs: 4	28 yrs: 2
23 yrs: 2	

#### Participants by Location:



#### Participant by Gender:

53% female  
47% male

### Participation Levels and Outputs

Of the 17 participants that started the project and attended the workshops, 65% (11 participants) remained actively involved, 5% (1 participant) dropped out and 30% (5

participants) remained connected but did not get actively involved over the course of the program. In these figures the primary indicator of involvement was whether participants produced work for Balkan Diskurs but the evaluation also considers participation and outputs generated through other PCRC-linked opportunities (for publication, to participate in events, to help facilitate research, competitions and seminars).

In total, 29 articles and photo-essays were produced by 11 participants for Balkan Diskurs with an additional 5 publications / exhibitions also happening during the project period from 2017 to the end of 2018. Five participants produced one article, three participants produced two to three articles with three participants being high active producing 4-7 articles. Those 30% of participants who remained connected to the project after the workshop but who did not actively produce articles cited their busy schedules as being the main reason for their lack of active participation; some were too busy juggling studies and work, one person was building their photography business while another needed to prioritise a new job. A number expressed the hope that they might be able to be more active at a later date when their other commitments has eased.

## Participant Project Experience

Participants' feedback on the project experience was overwhelmingly positive with 71% of participants reporting that they not only had nothing negative to say but to the contrary they had only positive feedback. A high majority said the project met or exceeded their expectations in terms of it being an enriching and beneficial experience<sup>8</sup> and they were keen to remain involved and engaged in PCRC activities.

The most common reported frustration was over the time it took to get articles published with participants wishing that PCRC editorial and translation processes took less time whilst recognising the time intensive nature of the work and the huge amount of support and effort made by PCRC. Some participants also highlighted issues over getting access to statistics, waiting for responses from interviewees and organisations and the challenges of doing interviews with non-Bosnians when translation was required. One participant voiced concerns over the fact that some people seemed to know each other before the workshops and had closer connections to PCRC project managers than others.

The participants highlighted two key elements of the project experience that they appreciated. Firstly, the **freedom and flexibility they had to chose their own article topics**. The active youth correspondents very much valued being part of an initiative that provided them with an opportunity to choose and define the stories they wrote about. As one participant commented, "We were able to discuss topics we consider valuable and important". While PCRC, with specific assignments such as the Srđan Aleksić Youth Competition, encouraged the youth correspondents to find stories from within their communities relating to inter-ethnic co-operation and moral courage, the young people were not directed on what stories to write and with general assignments were given

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<sup>8</sup> One participant dropped out so did not report back while only one other participant said that the project had not met their expectations.



freedom to choose their topics of interest. PCRC supported them to develop their research and interviewing skills, to edit and produce their work but the youth correspondents retained control over the content and focus of their stories. In a country where censorship is a significant issue for professional journalists, PCRC are keen to establish Balkan Diskurs as a pan-ethnic platform that does not subject its correspondents to censorship.

*“I loved the flexibility and the way everything is relaxed during work. No pressure, a lot of respect, and I got help from PCRC whenever I needed it.”*

*Project participant interview*

Leslie Woodward, PCRC's Co-Founder and Vice President, explains that their approach is to guide the youth correspondents through the process of exploring what they want to cover and to work with the ideas they propose, encouraging them to run with them.

The second element valued and highlighted by participants was the **encouraging and unpressurised mentoring support** they were given by PCRC. The mentoring provided them with a framework and process that participants described as 'relaxed' and 'respectful', cognizant of their other responsibilities and where they were given the space, time and help they needed. Rooted in the concerns and needs of

the participants, the project provided them with a structure in which they had a say in setting the framework and pace. This is especially relevant in an environment where many NGOs or agency led (peace-building) initiatives are perceived of by communities as imposed and top-down<sup>9</sup>. PCRC have sought to differentiate their approach, adapting and building it around the lived experiences of their participants.

Tatjana Milovanović, PCRC's Field Manager explains that they do not oblige participants to write articles or carry on working with PCRC. Going against the donor pressure to account for their impact in terms of participant and output numbers, Milovanović is honest that some participants do not continue to work with them after the initial workshops, some are too busy, some lose interest and some have other priorities. She explains they do not want to push anyone if they decide it is not for them; “In the end it depends on them and the amount of work they are ready to put into it. As far as we are concerned we are here ready to work with them.”<sup>10</sup>

These two elements of PCRC's approach are key to the program's success at engaging participants and building their confidence, creativity and capacity as peace-building actors. They designate the participants as active and autonomous agents whom the program seeks to engage with and support rather than assuming the programme's direct relevance and benefits to the participants. *Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program* is structured to provide youth correspondents with the space to determine their own levels and pace of engagement and this is recognised and valued by the participants. They do not feel obliged or pushed to participate but rather are encouraged to shape their own terms of engagement.

<sup>9</sup> Kappler, Stefanie. 2012. 'Divergent Transformation and Centrifugal Peace-building: The EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina'. *International Peacekeeping* 19 (5): 612–27.

<sup>10</sup> Tatjana Milovanović, 2018. Interview. June 27th

## Tolerance, Mutual Understanding and Inter ethnic Co-operation

The participant group represented the diverse experiences of people within BiH, some coming from mixed communities where they had interaction, knowledge and friendships with other ethnic groups and others coming from predominantly mono-ethnic or closed communities where they had little close contact with people of different ethnicities. Despite this diversity, the workshop surveys and initial participant data established that the participants, irrelevant of what kind of communities they came from, were **willing and open to engage with people from different ethnic groups**. They reported high levels of trust, tolerance and mutual understanding recognising different ethnicities as the same and strongly disagreeing with negative statements about different ethnic groups or statements about feeling anger towards other ethnic groups. They were also keen to have more friends from different ethnic groups and were open to being in a close relationship with someone who was not a member of their ethnic group. Most reported that they already had friends of different ethnicities that they trusted.

This is perhaps unsurprising given PCRC's recruitment strategy. This involved promoting the program through already established NGO and youth networks, partners and forums. Potential candidates were required to submit an application and one of the criteria for selection related to evidence of the candidates' engagement with civil society and activism. In this sense PCRC sought to recruit a mixture of participants (with varying levels of experience and from diverse geographical locations) who were either interested in pursuing journalism and communications as a career or were engaged in localised peace-building and NGO work. As such the targeted beneficiaries were engaged youth, some of whom were already active in their communities and could be identified as potential change-makers interested in peace-building.

*"I am expanding my perspective on how people live, what problems they are facing, and in what way. Also, positive stories really inspire me. Through this project, I realized the importance of better information and participation in the process of reconciliation."*

Project participant interview

Responses to the questions that revealed the **high levels of tolerance, mutual understanding and openness to inter-ethnic cooperation** stayed consistent, with few changes between the surveys conducted both before and after the workshop indicating that participants arrived with and sustained these perceptions. There were small increases in the questions relating to being able to trust other ethnic groups (4.5% and 6%) suggesting the workshops augmented participants already positive levels of trust.

There was however a more marked change in the responses to relating to attitudes towards forgiveness with increases indicating that **the workshops contributed to participants' willingness to forgive** (increases of 10% and 26%). While participants' belief in reconciliation remained relatively consistent over the two surveys there were more notable increases in participants' beliefs in

inter-ethnic co-operation to rebuild the country (5%) and live together in peace (18%).

The workshops contributed then to **expanding the participants' belief in inter-ethnic collaboration and co-operation and their capacity to work together constructively and in dialogue**. The friendships and networks that emerged between the students also demonstrated this. 88% of participants remained in contact with each other both privately and through social media<sup>11</sup>. The principle platform for staying in touch was the project Facebook group which many cited as being an invaluable resource in active use where they shared resources, links to opportunities and relevant events, invitations to seminars and info on competitions and activities. The participants in particular emphasised the **value derived from the new networks**, consisting both of the connections within the group and with the PCRC network more broadly, that they developed through the program.

This openness and desire to engage in collaborative working was evidenced in participants' engagement with collaborative assignments. 12 participants got involved in an Instagram based photo dialogue project

*"I learned a lot. Mostly different journalistic skills, writing articles and finding appropriate ways to tackle every day issues and to raise my voice."*

Project participant

*"The networking with a very diverse group of young people is super beneficial for my work and, generally, for my life as a young person in this country. I believe that we can make something for ourselves only if we are connected and act together and this program was a great opportunity to do just that."*

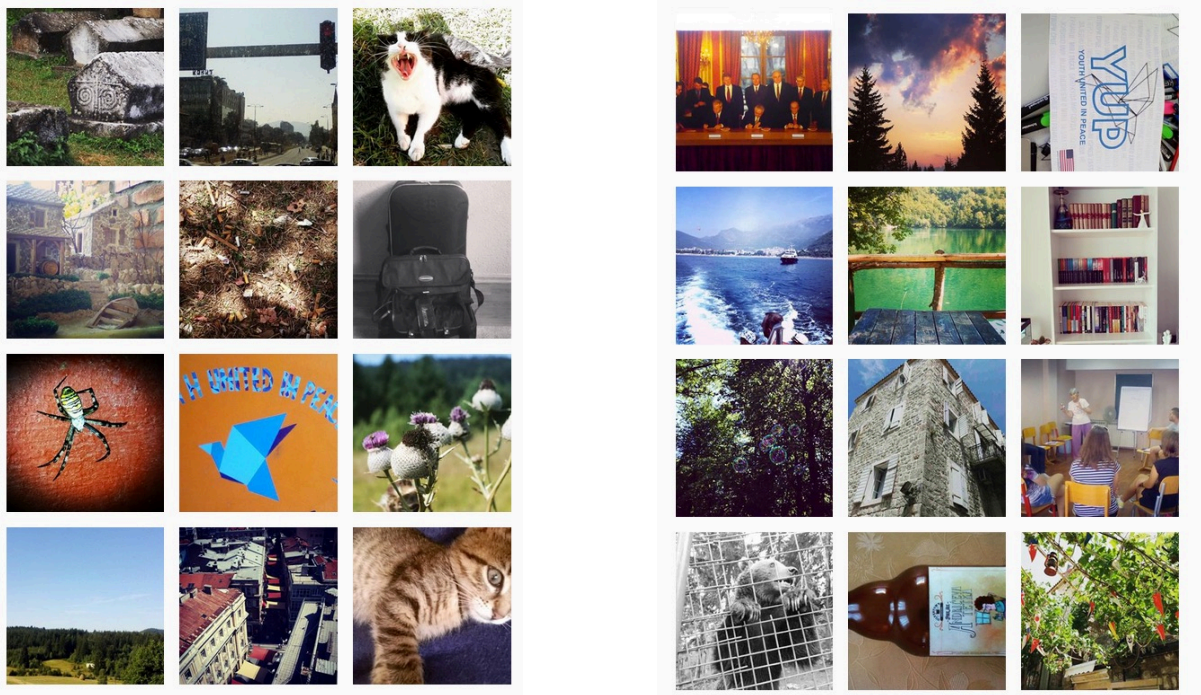
Project participant interviews

which involved participants, working in pairs, sending images back and forth to each other, responding to each other's images, creating and playing with a form of visual dialogue. In addition, some participated in *Possible Landscapes*<sup>12</sup>, an Instagram based participatory peace-building project where people contribute landscape photographs in order to build and celebrate a shared vision of BiH. Finally, towards the end of the project year, some participants went on to work together to collaboratively produce articles with each other and with youth correspondents from other years for both Balkans Diskurs and other publications<sup>13</sup>.

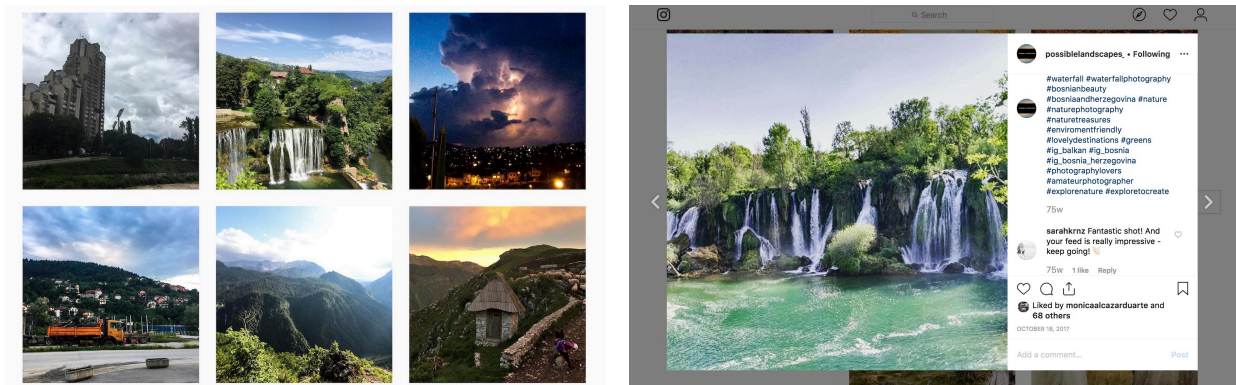
<sup>11</sup> Only 2 participants reported that they had not stayed in touch with anyone from the group.

<sup>12</sup> See here for further information on Possible Landscapes:  
[https://www.instagram.com/possiblelandscapes\\_bih/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/possiblelandscapes_bih/?hl=en) and  
<http://www.monicaalcazarduarte.com/possiblelandscapes>

<sup>13</sup> For ASBO magazine's Bosnia edition – see p14 of this report



Screen shots from 2 pairs of participants' Instagram photo dialogue projects



Images from Possible Landscapes BiH

@possiblelandscapes\_bih

## Moral Courage

The concept of moral courage derives from PCRC's Ordinary Heroes program that utilizes international stories of rescuer behaviour and moral courage to promote reconciliation and interethnic cooperation between BiH's divided citizens and youth. After a viewing of one of the Ordinary Heroes documentaries during the workshops, the program participants' discussion demonstrated **an active engagement and nuanced understanding of the concept of moral courage** and the important role it plays in building peace and coexistence. A number (7 participants) went on to enter stories (11 articles in total) in the Srđan Aleksić Youth Competition that focused on stories of moral courage, celebrating individuals, networks and organisations that challenge divisive politics and narratives. Seven of these stories were published on Balkan Diskurs by the end of 2018 with the rest scheduled for publication in 2019.

## Creativity

In terms of **skills acquisition**, all participants stated that their skills had increased as a result of the workshop training, especially their skills in interviewing (23% increase) and photography (12% increase). Those actively involved in the mentoring all reported that they continued to develop their research, writing and editorial skills over the project period as a result of the on-going support from PCRC mentors and the practical skills developed through their own article production. One participant described how the project motivated his writing, on topics that he had spent time thinking about but which they did not previously have the know-how to explore or to turn into interesting stories. The program thus built on the capacities of the participants providing them with skills and knowledge that amplified and extended their work as young peace activists. In turn, the increased skills and their

practical application through the development and production of articles built the confidence of the participants to pursue and realise projects.

*"Our primary goal is not to change opinions, it's just to provide different perspectives and to make people think. And usually when we do that it's enough. Our young people are smart and they can understand and think, they just need more perspective and stories."*

In the mid-project interviews a number of participants fed back on frustrations they were having with developing articles as they encountered issues such as not being able to secure information or interviews. However the majority of these students did manage to publish stories demonstrating ability to problem solve and to not give up. This is significant in the Bosnian context where youth disillusionment is a significant issue.

*Project Organiser*



*“For young aspiring journalists and photojournalists, it can be very hard to find someone willing to publish your work and give you a space to express yourself without the fear of being censored”.*

Project participant interview

course of the year, participants’ published work was viewed 61,699 times via PCRC and Balkan Diskurs online platforms and social media. In addition, participants’ work demanded sufficient attention to generate additional commissions and publications. Specifically, 8 Balkan Diskurs correspondents contributed articles and images to ASBO Magazine’s first Bosnian edition.

The quality of the resulting articles directly impacts the **career development and earning capacity** of the youth correspondents by building their professional credibility with potential employers. The fact that the articles are translated into English further boosts participants’ credentials and capital as up-and-coming journalists. Balkan Diskurs has a readership of over 100,000, many of whom (due to the fact publications are provided in English as well as Bosnian) come from the international community and this enables the participants to gain a level of visibility that validates their writing and activities. The impact of the programme on participants’ career prospects is evidenced by the successes of Balkan Diskurs trained youth correspondents from previous years who have gone on to gain employment in the fields of media and journalism<sup>14</sup>. Other employment opportunities also become available to active

participants through the PCRC network and invitations to work on short-term projects as translators, fixers and researchers. In the last year, 6 former youth correspondents have gained short-term employment in linked projects working for NGOs, academic institutions and researchers.

**PCRC’s approach and mentoring support** is undoubtedly crucial in this respect. Providing the young people with a creative space to define their own narratives and subjects but within a guided framework through which they received feedback and advice, allowing them to develop and mature their professional skills both empowered them and built their confidence as aspiring writers and photographers. The students came up with their own ideas but relied on PCRC to help them craft their stories.

PCRC staff emphasise the hard work that goes into developing and refining every single article to ensure that what is finally published meets professional standards. The quality of the content is demonstrated by the significant readership and reach of Balkan Diskurs articles. Over the

*“All platforms that provide alternative views and stances and give young people the possibility to express themselves are useful. In today’s society we deal with a large number of biased media and platforms such as Balkan Diskurs that value and nurture critical thinking are crucial in helping young people create change for this society.”*

Project participant interview

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<sup>14</sup> 3 youth correspondents from the 2015 cohort and 3 from the 2016 cohort have gone on to work in local and national TV and radio channels, magazines and journalism agencies.



Pages taken from ASBO Magazine's Bosnian Edition with features and images by Balkan Diskurs youth correspondents

<https://www.asbomagazine.com/>



The youth correspondents are paid a small honorarium for every article that gets published on the Balkan Diskurs platform. Woodward explains that this is especially important given PCRC's commitment to support the young people's activities and the huge challenges young Bosnians face gaining work in a country with one of the highest youth unemployment rate in the world<sup>15</sup>. Ultimately she recognises there is a limit to the benefits that participants gain from increased visibility and enhanced career prospects; "these young people really need money not just opportunities."<sup>16</sup> Such factors, that enable participants to benefit in terms of concrete earning opportunities as well as enhanced career prospects directly fed into building participants' creativity, skills and confidence.

Beyond PCRC's support, the **Balkan Diskurs platform** itself affords the young correspondents with a rare freedom and audience to pursue their creative and critical thinking. As one participant explained, *"the Balkan Diskurs platform is unique in BiH, and provides a great opportunity for young people who want their work to influence and make changes in society... the possibility of contributing a variety of topics of our own choosing is something very specific to Balkan Diskurs, and I really liked it"*. The diverse subject matter of the articles attests to the range of issues that the young people are interested in. The 30 articles produced for Balkan Diskurs cover topics including disability rights, domestic abuse, religious minorities, women's issues, support groups, social media, activist and NGO profiles and art and culture<sup>17</sup>. A number of the young correspondents spoke about mainstream media coverage that was overly concentrated on negative stories and past conflict. They highlighted the importance of positive stories. In this way the young participants, in forging their own narratives and finding their own stories, are creatively re-framing the debate and parameters of what defines Bosnian society and what is relevant for public discussion.

*"I am expanding my perspective on how people live, what problems they are facing, and in what way. Also, positive stories really inspire me. Through this project, I realized the importance of better information and participation in the process of reconciliation."*

Project participant interview

## Actors in Peace-building

The program successfully empowered the participants to develop and expand their capacity and credibility as actors in peace-building in 4 ways:

1. Building and amplifying their peace-building 'portfolios'
2. Building their public profiles and credibility
3. Exposing them to new perspectives and networks
4. Providing them with a space to forging their own future oriented and inclusive civil society narratives and activities

<sup>15</sup> According to World Bank Data on youth unemployment: [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sl.uem.1524.zs?year\\_high\\_desc=true](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sl.uem.1524.zs?year_high_desc=true)

<sup>16</sup> Leslie Woodward, 2018. Interview. 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>17</sup> See table of published articles on page 18 of this report.



*'We are our young inheritors of the future. If we speak out for the causes of our communities, it will influence other people as well. It is necessary to spread such energy in both a private and professional sense.'*

Project participant interview

Across the project period the young people produced significant content for Balkan Diskurs and other outlets as well as building on and amplifying their own civil activism, NGO and peace-building work. This is consistent with PCRC's experience in previous years where they have continued to support engaged participants and actively worked with them on projects and involved them in events and other opportunities in the years that followed. From the 2017-18 participant cohort examples of participants continuing their activism beyond the direct project activities through PCRC led and self-generated opportunities include:

#### **ARMIN DURGUT**

Armin was awarded first place in the Goran Terzić Memorial Photography Competition<sup>18</sup> for one of his photographs taken as part of "On the Margins", a PCRC project for which he was the lead photographer. "On the Margins" is a photography exhibition and publication that aims to challenge common stereotypes and discriminatory practices against BiH's Roma population. The project, supported by the Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission to BiH (OSCE BiH), the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the City of Sarajevo, was launched in June 2018 at the Sarajevo City Hall. It was moved to the Skenderija Steel Bridge on 28 June 2018 to be displayed as a part of the 2018 WARM Festival. The exhibition will also begin traveling across BiH starting in 2019 with the cities Brčko and Tuzla.

#### **ALMA MUJANOVIĆ**

Alma, as well as her work as a youth correspondent for Balkan Diskurs is a human rights activist, photographer, and musician working for several Sarajevo-based non-governmental organizations. She also actively works in her role as Founder of 'Znak za rijec' (Sign for a Word), a Facebook community that promotes sign language in Bosnia through creative multimedia (@znakzarijec).

#### **KRISTINA GADŽE**

Kristina studies journalism at the University of Mostar's Faculty of Philosophy. In addition to her studies, she writes for the student portal Treći.ba and runs the morning program for the Treći student radio.

*I think the youth play a crucial role in the process. We are spreading our ideas and thoughts and I think we can start our own projects. I also think we bear the burden of change.*

Project participant interview

The project and Balkan Diskurs platform helped these young people gain exposure and raise their own profiles and credibility as young professionals and peace activists, as discussed previously. The participants in particular emphasised the value derived from the new

<sup>18</sup> See here for media coverage of the award: <https://www.nezavisne.com/kultura/vizuelna-umjetnost/MFK-Goran-Terzic-Grand-Prix-za-Armina-Durguta-i-fotografiju-Na-margini/478282>

networks that they had developed through the program. They identified these as coming through firstly, friendships and networking with other participants and secondly, through PCRC and the increased exposure they had gained with the additional opportunities and events that had come through the program. These networks amplified participants' own self-directed civil society activities and work as media producers as well as exposed them to new opportunities and ideas creating a ripple-effect, expanding the program's direct impact.

Tatjana Milovanović explains how the primary goal of the project is not to change opinions but rather to work with young people to try "to open them up, to expose them to new perspectives and to different kinds of people and views."<sup>19</sup>. In doing so the project successfully encourages participants who chose to engage and to challenge the ways they have been taught to think, to enter into dialogue with others and to actively be part of conversations about civil and inclusive society, all of which expand and enhance their capabilities and agency as young peace-builders.

*"I think we need to differentiate ourselves from the war, point out that nobody acted in our name but in the name of their own ideals that were wrong and that we need to turn to the future"*

Project Participant interview

The project, beyond amplifying their capacities, networks and skills to work as peace-builders, also served to **solidify their identities as youth activists and to re-affirm the value and relevance of their efforts**. In BiH where young people lack opportunities and prospects and face significant challenges securing employment and finding quality education, youth apathy and disillusionment are serious barriers to building peace and democracy<sup>20</sup>. Projects that serve to motivate youth to actively involve themselves in civil society and to build youth voices, solidarity and engagement, have an important role to play building an inclusive society. By the end of the project, all the participants were definitive about the crucial role that young people had to play in building a better future for BiH, however, they were cognizant about the challenges they faced to affect meaningful social change. Many made reference to the condemnation that young activists faced within their communities and vocalised the biggest

challenge as being the "fight against the ingrained belief that nothing can be changed and that stories of peace and reconciliation are overrated" (project participant interview). The solidarity gained from the youth network facilitated by PCRC plays a crucial role in keeping the young people feeling less isolated and engaged.

What emerges from *Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents* is a version of what a **youth-driven peace-building and reconciliation agenda** might consist of. Being provided with a space in which they could define the content, empowered the young people to develop their own narratives on reconciliation. The participants, through their content and interviews, re-

<sup>19</sup> Tatjana Milovanović, 2018. Interview. June 27th

<sup>20</sup> Ziga, Jusuf, Lejla Turcilo, Amer Osmic, Sanela Basic, Nedzma Džananović Miraslija, Damir Kapidžić, and Jelena Brkić Smigoc. 2015. 'Youth Study Bosnia and Herzegovina'. Sarajevo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

BALKAN DISKURS YOUTH CORRESPONDENTS 2017-2018 PUBLICATIONS			
AUTHOR	PLATFORM	DATE	TITLE / HYPERLINK
Alma Mujanović	Balkan Diskurs	6/2/2018	<a href="#">Overcoming the Odds: Members of Bosnia's Disabled Community Successfully Navigate Education and Employment</a>
Alma Mujanović	Balkan Diskurs	14/6/2018	<a href="#">Rudi: A Sarajevo Legend</a>
Anja Zulić	Balkan Diskurs	30/6/2018	<a href="#">Only Journalists Can Fight for Serious and Independent Journalism</a>
Anja Zulić	Balkan Diskurs	10/12/18	<a href="#">Meet the Mormons: Religious Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Part I)</a>
Anja Zulić	Balkan Diskurs	26/2/2019	<a href="#">International Society for Krishna Consciousness: Religious Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Part II)</a>
Anja Zulić	Balkan Diskurs	forthcoming	<a href="#">Ahmadiyya movement: Religious Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Part III)</a>
Anja Zulić	Balkan Diskurs	23/1/2019	<a href="#">SARA Srebrenica: Strengthening Social Cohesion</a>
Anja Zulić	ASBO	Dec 2018	<a href="#">Fashion and Beauty as Symbols of Resistance</a>
Anja Zulić	ASBO	Dec 2018	<a href="#">Demofest: Where Sounds Collide</a>
Armin Durgut	Balkan Diskurs	30/1/2018	<a href="#">It Was Once Used to Kill, but Now It's a Flowerpot</a>
Armin Durgut	Balkan Diskurs	25/9/2017	<a href="#">Monsieur Chat: The Yellow Cat Who Smiles Down At Sarajevo's Passers-by</a>
Armin Durgut	ASBO	Dec 2018	<a href="#">Hip Hop Mixed with Reggae and a Little Drum'n'Bass: On the Margins: challenging stereotypes of and prejudices toward BiH's Roma population</a>
Armin Durgut	Exhibition	2018	
Azra Memišević	Balkan Diskurs	16/2/2018	<a href="#">Pretty Woman Forum: the Social Network Heroines</a>
Kristina Gadže	Balkan Diskurs	28/6/2018	<a href="#">Through Art, Aida Šehović Spreads the Memory of the Victims of Genocide</a>
Kristina Gadže	Balkan Diskurs	8/2/2018	<a href="#">BiH Organizations are Making Progress in the Fight Against Animal Cruelty</a>
Kristina Gadže	Balkan Diskurs	forthcoming	<a href="#">The Ever-present Discrimination Against Women in the Workplace: A Result of BiH's Patriarchal Society</a>
Kristina Gadže	Balkan Diskurs	30/11/2018	<a href="#">The Center for Peace and Multi-ethnic Cooperation: A Guiding Star for Youth in Mostar</a>
Kristina Gadže	Balkan Diskurs	4/2/2019	<a href="#">With a Good Story and Some Perseverance, You Can Reach the Masses</a>
Kristina Gadže	Balkan Diskurs	21/1/2019	<a href="#">Preserving Mostar's Jewish Culture and Heritage</a>
Marko Milikota	Balkan Diskurs	6/6/2018	<a href="#">Conditional Sentencing: The System's Only Response to Domestic Violence in FBiH</a>
Medina Rizvanović Razić	Balkan Diskurs	16/1/2019	<a href="#">My Disability is Not a Problem, It's a State of Affair</a>
Milan Ilić	Balkan Diskurs	forthcoming	<a href="#">Cyber-bullying: A Modern Form of Violence</a>
Monija Markić	Balkan Diskurs	4/6/2018	<a href="#">The Age of "Yellow Gold": Life as a Herzegovinian Tobacconist in the 1950s</a>
Monija Markić	Balkan Diskurs	28/01/2019	<a href="#">He Tried to Strangle Me... I Bought a One-way Ticket Out</a>
Monija Markić	Balkan Diskurs	forthcoming	<a href="#">The Marginalized Life of Mostar's Roma</a>
Slobodan Blagovčanin	Balkan Diskurs	8/02/2018	<a href="#">The Fisherman Who Almost Caught a Nobel Prize</a>
Slobodan Blagovčanin	Balkan Diskurs	2/7/2018	<a href="#">Confession: The Look of Contempt</a>
Slobodan Blagovčanin	ASBO		<a href="#">Hip Hop Mixed with Reggae and a Little Drum'n'Bass: Frenkie's Story (for ASBO Magazine)</a>
Tarik Čalkić	Balkan Diskurs	11/2/2018	<a href="#">Youth United in Peace: 25 Years of Seaside Peace-building</a>

define the peace-building narrative moving the focus beyond memory, conflict and inter-ethnic relations. Their concerns are **future-oriented** and **issue (rather than ethnicity) focused**. The scope of their articles demonstrates how they have consciously carved space to celebrate positive stories, inclusivity and local culture, music and personalities. While many peace-building frameworks designate inter-ethnic relations as the defining narrative and seek to impose a version of reconciliation overly focused on ethnic identity, the youth correspondents are concerned with a more open-ended and eclectic perspective. A quick review of the articles produced by the youth correspondents reveal a range of concerns and interests that relate to living in a pluralistic and inclusive society. Engagements with the past are related to contemporary and future looking issues. Their work recognises identities as intersectional and subverts and challenges the notion that ethnicity is at the root of all problems in BiH.

## CONCLUSION

With *Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Programme* PCRC have, over iterative project cycles, developed a responsive project model that is uniquely positioned to meet the needs and priorities of its participants and to impact broader civil society and peace-building in BiH. This evaluative research evidences the project's impact on participants' attitudes to peace-building and reconciliation, on their skills and creativity, on their capacities, motivations and visibility as actors in peace-building and on their social and professional capital. Using participatory and citizen media, the project builds solidarity amongst its engaged participants through its mentoring, platform and network, providing them with an invaluable resource that they can draw on to develop their career portfolios and build their civil society activities. The success of the programme cannot be assessed in quantitative terms according to whether it achieved a 100% success rate with the active engagement and outputs generated by all of its original participants. Rather its success must be judged in terms of the expansive impact of the activities and outputs of its more active participants and the network and outcomes that it generates over the long-term and beyond the single annual project cycle.

As a model for youth-driven arts and media peace-building learning from Balkan Diskurs Youth Correspondents Program holds valuable insights for the wider field of peace-building. Rooted in the lived experiences of the young people it seeks to support, the project assigns its youth correspondents with a meaningful role setting the terms of engagement and in defining the agenda for change.

Woodward describes how PCRC view their youth correspondents as a different but crucial kind of peace-builder, "we consider them so important in the peace-building process because they're providing the information and they're the ones that are going to disseminate the information that changes people, that opens people's minds and eyes.... Our focus is on media makers as change makers"<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Leslie Woodward, 2018. Interview. 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

